

## Article

# 2011 Census: Internal and international migration for the United Kingdom in the year prior to the 2011 Census

We look at the usually resident population of the UK who were living at a different address (either in the UK or overseas), 1 year prior to the 2011 Censuses of England and Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. Analysis is by age, sex and geography at national and local levels. Of the total UK population, results show that 12% had a different address 1 year previously, with a high majority of these moving from within the UK.



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## Table of contents

1. [Foreword](#)
2. [Key points](#)
3. [Data](#)
4. [Introduction](#)
5. [Internal migration](#)
6. [International migration](#)
7. [Release information](#)
8. [Background notes](#)

# 1. Foreword

This story analyses internal and international migration patterns for the usually resident population of the UK, based on data for address one year prior to the 2011 Censuses of England and Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. Analyses are by age, sex and geography at national and local levels.

## 2. Key points

- Of the total UK population in 2011 (63.2 million), 7.5 million (12%) had a different address one year previously.
- 6.8 million (11%) had a previous address within the UK, and 687,200 (1%) had a previous address outside the UK.
- The majority (59% or 4.0 million) of those who had moved within the UK had moved within the same local authority (or equivalent) in the previous year.
- The majority (71%) of those with a different address a year prior to the 2011 Census were aged 16 to 49.
- Oxford (12%), Brighton and Hove (11%) and Southampton (11%) had the highest proportions of moves within the same local authority.
- City of London/Westminster (6%) and Kensington and Chelsea (5%) had the highest proportions of moves from outside the UK.

## 3. Data

Origin-destination data (Part 1) can be found on the [Nomis website](#).

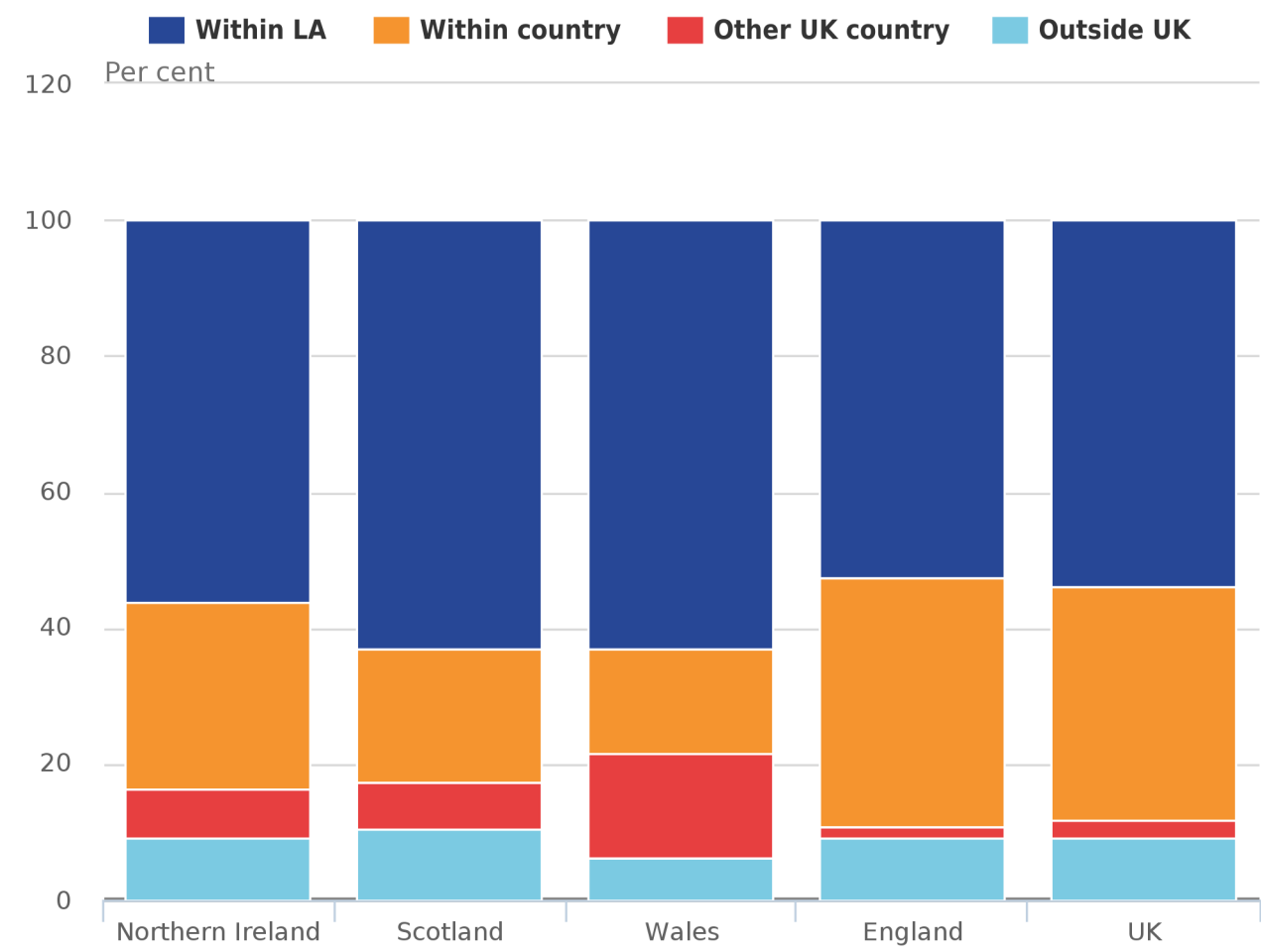
## 4. Introduction

This analysis looks at the usually resident<sup>1</sup> population of the UK in 2011 who were living at a different address one year prior to the 2011 Census<sup>2</sup>. Of the total UK population (63.2 million), 7.5 million (12%) had a different address one year previously; 6.8 million (11%) had a previous address within the UK, while the remaining 687,200 (1.1%) had a previous address outside the UK.

Of the 6.8 million residents who had moved within the UK in the year prior to the 2011 Census, almost all (97% or 6.6 million) had moved within the same constituent country. The majority of the 6.8 million (59% or 4.0 million) had moved within the same local authority (England and Wales), council area (Scotland) or district council area (Northern Ireland).

The proportion of moves occurring within each constituent UK country varied (Figure 1), partly reflecting the relative population sizes of the four constituent countries. The proportion was highest for those migrating within England (89%) and lowest for those migrating within Wales (78%), while Wales and Scotland had the highest proportion of moves within the same local authority (63%). Conversely, those living in England had the lowest proportion who were living in another UK country one year prior to the 2011 Census (1.5%), while Wales had the highest proportion (16%). Residents in Scotland had the highest proportion who had an address outside the UK (10%) one year prior to the 2011 Census.

**Figure 1: Moves for the usually resident population who had a different address one year prior to the 2011 Census for UK and constituent countries**



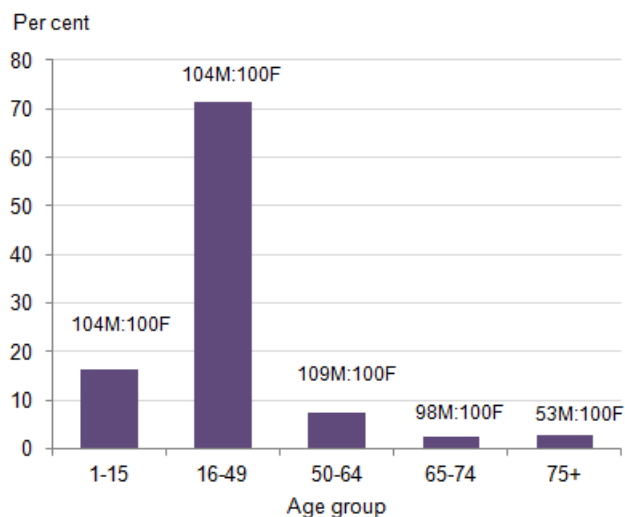
Source: Census - Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Data from census table MM01CUK\_all via Nomis.

The majority (71%) of those with a different address a year prior to the 2011 Census were aged 16 to 49 (Figure 2); this may relate to movement of students (to and from university), and movement for employment. A recent [ONS publication](#) identified that those aged 19 were the most likely to move in England and Wales. People may also move in the same local area to gain more space for growing families or to areas perceived to be better for families; this may also be reflected in the proportion of movers in the age group 1 to 15. The distribution between male and female movers is relatively even in most age groups up to 65 to 74, but in the 75 and over age group there were more females who moved (53 males for every 100 females). This may be the result of there being more elderly females than males as a result of greater [life expectancy](#), and so more females moving after the loss of a partner, including downsizing into more manageable accommodation or to access residential care support. A previous [ONS publication](#) on internal migration for those aged 65 and over in England and Wales, also identified that older people were less likely to move than those aged under 65.

**Figure 2: Age and sex distribution of UK residents with a different usual address one year prior to 2011 Census**



**Source: Census - Office for National Statistics**

**Notes:**

1. Sex ratios are given for number of males per 100 females within each age group.
2. Data from census table MM01CUK\_all via Nomis.

**Notes for introduction**

1. The usually resident population refers to people who live in the UK for 12 months or more, including those who have been resident for less than 12 months but intend to stay for a total period of 12 months or more. The population base for the 2011 Census was the usually resident population of United Kingdom, defined as anyone who, on the night of 27 March 2011, was either (a) resident in the United Kingdom and who had been resident, or intended to be resident in the UK for a period of 12 months or more, or (b) resident outside the UK but had a permanent UK address and intended to be outside the UK for less than a year.

2. Census question 21 from the England and Wales Census asked 'One year ago, what was your usual address?' Similar questions were asked in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

**21** One year ago, what was your usual address?

➔ If you had no usual address one year ago, state the address where you were staying

☐ The address on the front of this questionnaire

☐ Student term time/boarding school address in the UK, write in term time address below

☐ Another address in the UK, write in below

Postcode

OR ☐ Outside the UK, write in country

## 5. Internal migration

Of the 6.8 million residents who had moved within the UK in the year prior to the 2011 Census, the majority (59% or 4.0 million) had moved within the same local authority (or equivalent). The remaining 41% had moved from elsewhere in the UK.

Table 1 summarises the top ten local authorities (or equivalent) in the UK for moves within the same local authority in the year prior to the 2011 Census. All of these areas had universities, and the high levels may reflect movement of university students to different accommodation between academic years, and also local movement of residents, for example from temporary to more permanent accommodation.

**Table 1: Top ten local authorities for proportion of usually resident population with an address in the same local authority one year prior to 2011 Census**

Rank	Local authority	Resident population (thousands)	Previous address in same local authority (thousands)	%
1	Oxford	152	18	11.6
2	Brighton and Hove	273	31	11.4
3	Southampton	237	27	11.3
4	Manchester	503	56	11.2
5	Cardiff	346	38	11.0
6	Nottingham	306	33	10.9

7	Newcastle upon Tyne	280	30	10.8
8	Exeter	118	13	10.7
9	Edinburgh	477	51	10.7
10	Bristol	428	45	10.6

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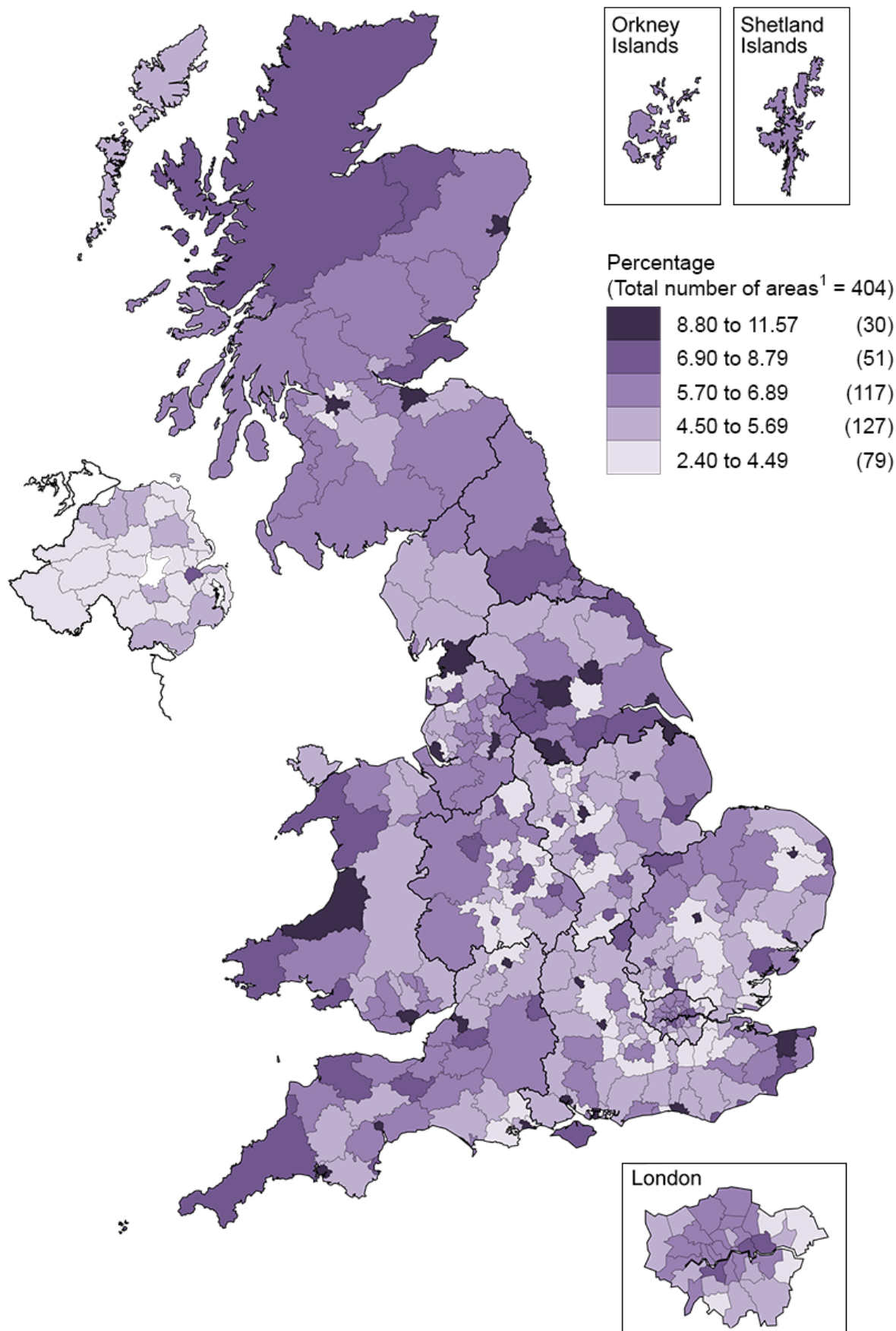
Source: Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Data from census table MM01CUK\_all via Nomis.

Map 1 shows the proportion of the usually resident population in 2011 who had moved within the same local authority (or equivalent) in the previous year. The proportions were generally lower in parts of South-East England compared with the rest of the UK.

**Map 1: Moves within a local authority in the year prior to 2011 Census as a proportion of the usually resident population**



<sup>1</sup> Local authority districts (England and Wales), council areas (Scotland) and district council areas (Northern Ireland).  
Data have been merged for Isles of Scilly and Cornwall and also for City of London and Westminster because of small population sizes.

Source: Office for National Statistics

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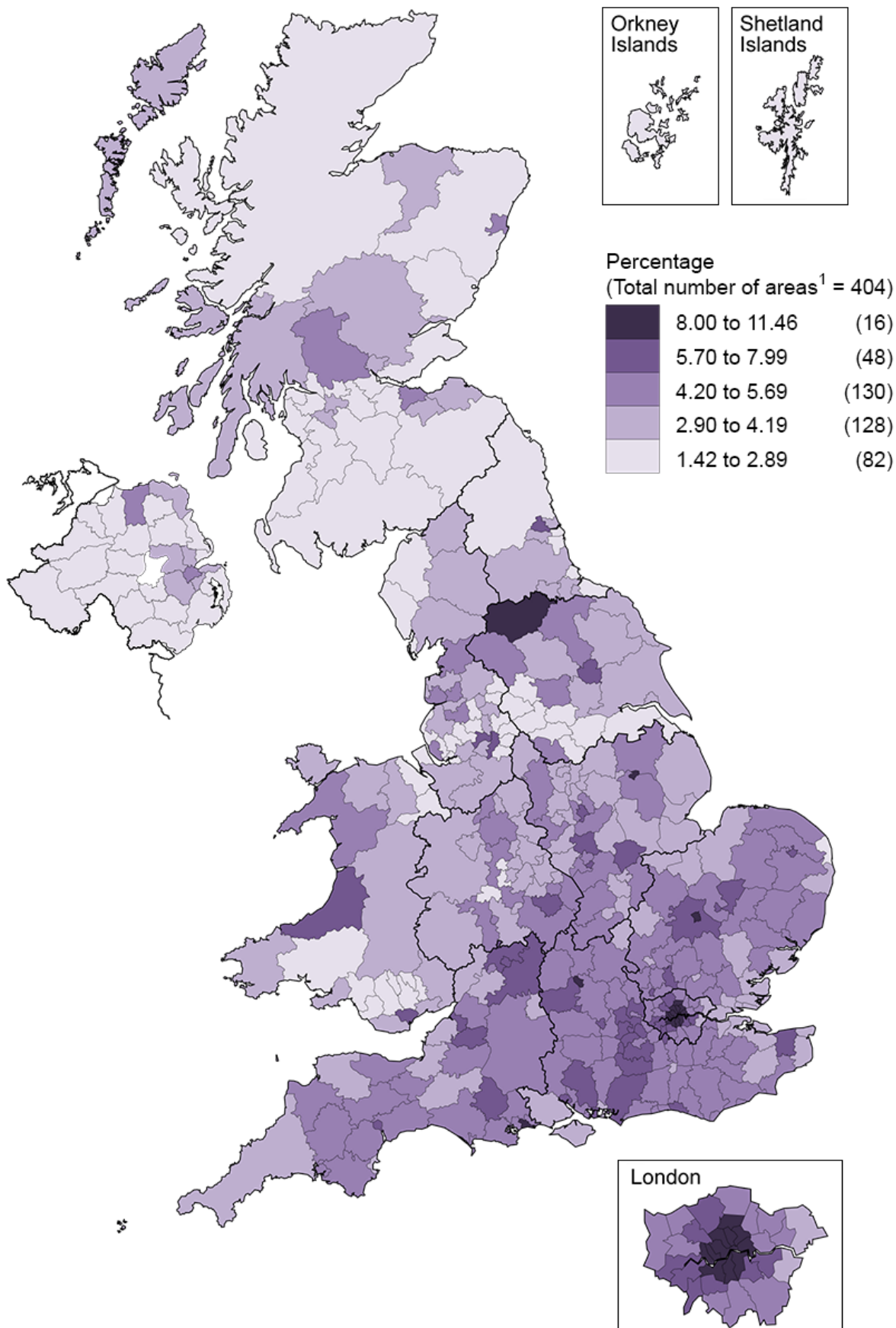
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Map 2 shows moves into local authorities (or equivalent) from elsewhere in the UK as a proportion of the usually resident population of the local authority. Generally, a higher proportion of moves were made into local authorities in the South-East of England, particularly in London (8 of the 10 highest were London boroughs); this may be due to employment opportunities in London, and may be partly affected by the smaller geographical sizes of local authorities in more densely populated areas, meaning that relatively short moves may be across local authority boundaries. The highest proportions were seen in Islington and Hammersmith and Fulham (both over 11%).

Oxford and Cambridge were the only two local authorities outside London in the top ten (both 9.9%); this is likely to reflect movement of students. High proportions were also seen in areas of Northern England such as Richmondshire (8.2% ranked 15th); this may reflect movements of Armed Forces personnel.

**Map 2: Moves from elsewhere in the United Kingdom in the year prior to Census 2011 as a proportion of the usually resident population by local area**



<sup>1</sup> Local authority districts (England and Wales), council areas (Scotland) and district council areas (Northern Ireland).  
Data have been merged for Isles of Scilly and Cornwall and also for City of London and Westminster because of small population sizes.

Source: Office for National Statistics

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[Map 2 data \(61 Kb Excel sheet\)](#)

## 6. International migration

Of the usually resident population of the UK, 1.1% (687,200) lived outside the UK one year prior to the 2011 Census (Table 2). This varied across the UK, with 1.2% of those usually resident in Scotland, 1.1% of those usually resident in England, 0.8% for Northern Ireland and 0.7% for Wales.

**Table 2: Proportion of usually resident population with an address outside the UK one year prior to 2011 Census**

	Resident population (millions)	Previous address abroad (thousands)	%
United Kingdom	63.2	687.2	1.1
England	53	592.1	1.1
Wales	3.1	20.4	0.7
Scotland	5.3	61.1	1.2
Northern Ireland	1.8	13.6	0.8

Source: Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Data from census table MM01CUK\_all via Nomis.

Table 3 shows the ten local authorities (or equivalent) with the highest proportions of the resident population who were living outside the UK one year prior to the 2011 Census. The table also shows the two highest contributor countries for each of these 10 local authorities. Six of these local authorities were in London: City of London and Westminster<sup>1</sup> (6.4%) and Kensington and Chelsea (5.5%) were the two highest, with their two largest contributor countries in both cases being USA and France.

Outside London, cities such as Cambridge (4.6%), Oxford (4.4%) and Edinburgh (3.4%) had high levels, reflecting the high proportions of students in annual inflows to the UK. Forest Heath (Suffolk) also had a high proportion (4.6%), reflecting the presence of foreign Armed Forces (these were mainly US personnel and their families previously stationed in USA and South Korea). Aberdeen's high levels probably reflect movement of oil industry workers from outside the UK.

In Wales, Cardiff had the highest proportion at 1.7% (52nd within the UK). In Northern Ireland, Dungannon had the highest proportion at 1.8% (51st highest area within UK).

**Table 3: Top ten local authorities for proportion of usually resident population with an address outside the UK one year prior to 2011 Census**

Rank	Local authority	Resident population (thousands)	Previously lived abroad (thousands)	% lived abroad	Highest ranking country of previous residence	Number	Second highest ranking country of previous residence	Number
1	City of London, Westminster	227	14	6.4	USA	2,225	France	1,357
2	Kensington and Chelsea	159	9	5.5	USA	1,522	France	1,057
3	Camden	220	10	4.6	USA	1,420	France	704
4	Cambridge	124	6	4.6	USA	608	China	393
5	Forest Heath	60	3	4.6	USA	1,800	South Korea	129

6	Oxford	152	7	4.4	USA	840	Germany	443
7	Hammersmith and Fulham	182	8	4.4	Australia	1,486	France	823
8	Tower Hamlets	254	10	4.1	USA	836	France	729
9	Islington	206	7	3.6	USA	841	Australia	630
10=	Edinburgh	477	16	3.4	India	1,350	China	1,331
10=	Aberdeen City	223	8	3.4	Nigeria	873	Poland	608

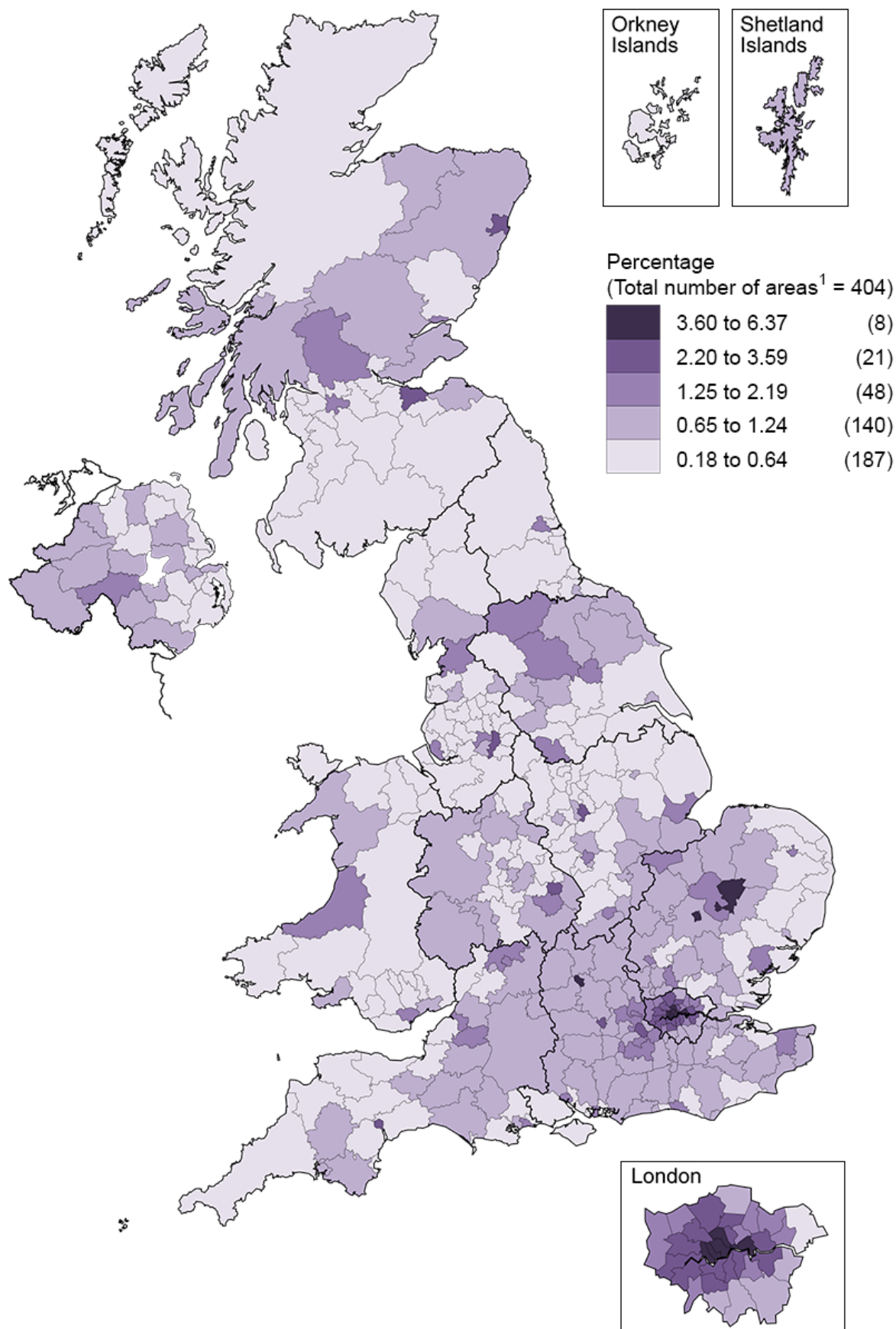
Source: Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Data from census tables MM01CUK\_LA\_non-UK and MF02UK\_LA\_non-UK via Nomis.

Map 3 shows the areas with the highest proportions of the resident population who were living outside the UK one year prior to the 2011 Census. Overall the South and South-East of England, Yorkshire and Central and Eastern Scotland had the highest levels.

**Map 3: Moves from outside the United Kingdom in the year prior to Census 2011 as a proportion of the usually resident population by local area**



<sup>1</sup> Local authority districts (England and Wales), council areas (Scotland) and district council areas (Northern Ireland).  
Data have been merged for Isles of Scilly and Cornwall and also for City of London and Westminster because of small population sizes.

Source: Office for National Statistics

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For the UK as a whole the most common country of previous residence was India (6.7% of all those with a previous usual address abroad); this was followed by the USA (6.3%) and Poland (5.9%) (Table 4). The country of previous residence does not necessarily reflect either country of birth or nationality, and will include return migration of UK nationals or UK-born people. Those who migrate to the UK from abroad and subsequently move within the UK in the same year will be recorded as having a previous address abroad, while their within-UK move will not be recorded. However, people who have migrated to the UK may initially stay, for example, within England and later move elsewhere in the UK for work or education; consequently their country of origin will not be recorded as being outside the UK.

The most common countries of previous residence varied by UK country; the most common country of previous residence for those who had migrated to Northern Ireland from outside the UK was Ireland, accounting for almost one in four (23%) international immigrants (Northern Ireland and Ireland share a land border). China accounted for 7.3% of international immigrants to Scotland, perhaps reflecting a similar pattern of Chinese student migration noted in [England and Wales](#).

**Table 4: Top five non-UK countries of previous residence as percentage of all international inflows by UK country**

	Countries of origin	Number	%
UK	India	46,000	6.7
	USA	43,400	6.3
	Poland	40,300	5.9
	Australia	37,000	5.4
	Spain	34,100	5
England	India	39,900	6.7
	USA	37,400	6.3
	Poland	33,100	5.6
	Australia	31,900	5.4
	Spain	29,800	5
Wales	India	1,500	7.4
	Poland	1,500	7.1
	China	1,500	7.1
	Spain	1,100	5.4
	Australia	1,000	5.1
Scotland	China	4,500	7.3
	USA	4,400	7.1
	Poland	4,300	7
	India	4,100	6.7
	Australia	3,100	5
Northern Ireland	Ireland	3,200	23.4
	Poland	1,500	11
	Lithuania	1,300	9.7
	Australia	900	6.9
	USA	800	6.1

Source: Office for National Statistics

Notes:



1. Data from census tables MM01CUK\_LA\_non-UK and MF02UK\_LA\_non-UK via Nomis.

## Notes for international migration

1. City of London and Westminster are combined owing to the small numbers in City of London data sets. Cornwall and Isles of Scilly are combined owing to the small numbers in Isles of Scilly data sets.

## 7. Release information

This release provides origin-destination tables from the 2011 Censuses of the United Kingdom, on the topics of migration and students. Tables are provided for merged local authorities in England and Wales and for local authorities in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

In this geographic hierarchy, the London boroughs of Westminster and City of London have been merged, and Cornwall UA has been merged with the Isles of Scilly UA. All other London boroughs, unitary authorities and districts in England and unitary authorities in Wales remain unmerged in this hierarchy.

More information on merged local authorities is available from [ONS Geography](#).

There are four tables in this release, all of which are available from the [Nomis](#) website.

These tables are accompanied by a piece of summary analysis:

Internal and International Migration for the United Kingdom in the Year Prior to the 2011 Census.

Further origin-destination statistics for the United Kingdom will be available later in the year, more information on this can be found in the [2011 Census prospectus](#).

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is responsible for carrying out the census in England and Wales. Simultaneous but separate censuses took place in Scotland and Northern Ireland. These were run by the National Records of Scotland (NRS) and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA). ONS is responsible for the publication of UK statistics by compiling comparable statistics from the UK statistical agencies above). For Scotland-specific enquiries [contact NRS](#). For Northern Ireland-specific enquiries [contact NISRA](#).

Further information on the methodology and quality assurance processes used to produce 2011 Census estimates is available from the [ONS](#), [NRS](#) and [NISRA](#) websites for their respective countries.

## 8. Background notes

1. Relevant Table numbers are provided in all download files within this publication. All data Tables are available via the [Nomis](#) website.
2. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available by visiting [www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html](http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html) or from the Media Relations Office email: [media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk)

These National Statistics are produced to high professional standards and released according to the arrangements approved by the UK Statistics Authority.